

**Work Support Strategies
Streamlining Access, Strengthening Families
Summary
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Application Basics

- 1 year of planning at up to \$250,000; 3 years of implementation at \$400-500,000 per year
- Up to 8 states will be selected
- Technical assistance support, convenings, and other assistance provided by Center on Budget and Urban Institute in addition to funding
- Funds can be used for state staff support; other staffing, consultants, and other related costs. Software and hardware are discouraged as costs.
- One agency per state may apply; must be designated by Governor's office
- Letter of Intent due October 1; full proposal due November 1; bidder's conference Oct. 6
- 25 double spaced pages; planning year budget; letters of support

Three goals of initiative

- Top priority to improve the health and well-being of low-income families, stabilize their family and work lives, and enable them to progress in the workforce by increasing the share of eligible families that receive and keep the package of work supports and benefits for which they qualify.
- Second is to deliver benefits more effectively and efficiently, reducing state administrative burdens as well as the burden on clients, through technologically innovative and customer-driven methods of eligibility determination, enrollment, and retention.
- Third is to glean lessons from the experience of the demonstration states to inform broader state and federal policies through a rigorous evaluation component.

Expected Strategies

- **Policy and regulatory changes**, such as eliminating technical differences between SNAP and Medicaid eligibility definitions to the extent allowed by federal law; automatically incorporating SNAP income findings into eligibility determinations for child health coverage under the Express Lane Eligibility option; or reducing the frequency of child care subsidy adjustments between redetermination dates to simplify child care retention and align with SNAP eligibility;
- **Changes in administrative practices and processes**, such as changes in practices for handling renewals to avoid administrative closures that may result in new applications thereafter;
- **Changes in client service strategies**, such as reducing in-person visits or improving communication mechanisms with caseworkers; and
- **Changes in technology and information systems**, such as enhanced ability to interact with and use external data relevant to household eligibility.

Expected Outcomes by end of Phase 2 (implementation):

1. increased enrollment and retention rates and reduced churning and enrollment instability among households who qualify for critical public work support and benefit programs;
2. more effective, integrated, streamlined, and customer-friendly systems for eligibility determination and benefit delivery (which may, depending on the state's starting point and

- goals, lead to administrative savings and/or the ability to enroll more families without additional burden on staff);
3. improved state capacity to measure and monitor the impact of system, policy, and procedural changes, and to use the information collected to continuously improve the program operations;
 4. changes in state programs that are likely to endure beyond the conclusion of the initiative, such as administrative improvements; and
 5. an increased understanding of successful enrollment and retention strategies as well as needed federal policy changes.
6. Ford expects that grantees will identify and work to achieve their own unique goals that address needs in their particular states.

State commitments:

- At a minimum, look at SNAP, Medicaid/CHIP, and Child Care programs; may include others if there is a compelling reason;
- Demonstrate involvement from leadership of each state agency involved in initiative
- Commit to self-directed diagnostic assessment and developing an action plan in first year;
- Commit to sharing both aggregate and case-level administrative data consistent with federal privacy standards for the purpose of evaluation; and
- Commit to using a portion of the project funds to support a clear leadership structure for the program, including involvement of sufficiently senior officials to guide a cross-agency initiative, where applicable.

Selection Criteria

- Commitment, leadership, and stakeholder involvement;
- Coordinated and simplified enrollment and retention policies;
- Operational systems that support enhanced access, stability, and program coordination;
- Collection and use of data to assess and fine-tune performance;
- Continuity and sustainability; and
- Additional financial support.

Proposal Elements

- Executive Summary (1 page)
- Project Goals and Objectives (2 pages)
- State Human Services Environment and Leadership Commitment (4 pages)
- Past Experience with Streamlining Access and Retention (6 pages)
- Planning Grant Project Description (6 pages)
- Plans for Collection and Use of Data (4 pages)
- Continuity and Sustainability (2 pages)
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Letters of Support:
 - Governor's Office
 - Each state agency involved in proposal
 - Other stakeholders
 - Any financial commitments beyond Ford